



Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office

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House Natural Resources, Great Lakes, Land use and Environment Committee
Lansing MI

Dear Committee Members,

The Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a Congregation of 524 sisters and 114 associates, is committed to bringing about the dream of God on planet Earth through the traditional ministry of education as well as pastoral care, justice advocacy, spiritual and psychological counseling, sustainability, and direct service to the poor in the United States and developing nations. Through these ministries, we develop structures that promote peace and justice and bring unity to people worldwide.

This past December a scientific report, signed by about 75 of the region's aquatic specialists, warned that disappearing wetlands and degraded shorelines indicate the immune system of the Great Lakes is weakened and need to be restored to prevent the ecological collapse of the lakes. It is crucial to protect the Great Lakes because by protecting them we protect the life and livelihood of future generations as well as our own.

A few years ago, the IHMs made a personal commitment to protect this resource when we constructed a wetland on our Motherhouse property that collects water from sinks, showers and tubs and recirculates it for flushing toilets. That, and the installation of water-conserving fixtures, have reduced water consumption by 49.6 percent. The community felt that the changes were worth the investment because fresh water is limited, even in the Great Lakes bioregion, and because the changes will pay for themselves in time through water saved.

Recent contributions from the Great Lakes Task Force Report and Governor Granholm's Great Lakes Water Legacy Act have helped to clarify the actions needed to protect the lakes. However, we believe the legislation should also include three additional protections:

1. Self-certification of water conservation requiring each water-using sector to develop water management practices for their industry and then certify that they are following them;
2. Preventing diversions of Great Lakes water by requiring diversions to be approved by the legislature;
3. Protecting Michigan's natural resources by expanding the definition of adverse resource impact to include damages caused by water withdrawal on private property and to water-dependent resources without fish populations.

We urge the committee to **support water use legislation, SB 850-852, 854, 857** to protect and preserve this most sacred resource. I look forward to working with you to accomplish this.

Sincerely,

Nancy Seubert, Coordinator